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Travel Report: North Cape Tour I 2018

In the “Sixfoot” through walls of rain, midnight sun, swarms of mosquitoes, and Baltic gravel tracks — all the way to the edge of Europe and back.

Travel Dates: June 10 – August 7, 2018 | **Route:** DE · DK · SE · NO · FI · EE · LV · LT · PL

> Eight weeks, nine countries, one 6×6 expedition camper named “Sixfoot” — and a weather forecast that threw everything at us, from 0 °C snow squalls to 29 °C Finnish lake-swimming heat. This journal follows our journey from Glücksburg up Norway’s dramatic fjords to the Barents Sea, down through Finland’s labyrinth of lakes, and across the Baltics and Poland back into everyday life.

Overview The Seven Stages at a Glance

	Dates	Route Highlights
I. Heading North	Jun 10 – Jun 12, 2018	Glücksburg (Holnis) – Copenhagen – Øresund Bridge – Malmö
II. Southern Norway & Fjords	Jun 13 – Jun 24, 2018	Oslo – Preikestolen – Hardangerfjord – Bergen – Sognefjell – Geiranger – Atlantic Ocean Road – Trondheim
III. Arctic Circle & Islands	Jun 25 – Jul 3, 2018	Torghatten – Arctic Circle – Lofoten – Vesterålen (Nyksund) – Senja – Tromsø
IV. Finnmark & North Cape	Jul 4 – Jul 8, 2018	Repparfjord – North Cape – Gjesvær – Porsangerfjord – Vardø – Kirkenes – Grense Jakobselv
V. Finland’s Lake Odyssey	Jul 9 – Jul 21, 2018	Inari – Ivalo – Kemijärvi – Hossa – Silent People – Savonlinna – Lake Saimaa – Porvoo – Helsinki
VI. Discovering the Baltics	Jul 22 – Aug 1, 2018	Tallinn – Saaremaa (Lõu Lighthouse) – Riga – Rundāle Palace – Curonian Spit – Trakai
VII. Poland & Homeward	Aug 2 – Aug 7, 2018	Masuria – Pomerania (Lubieszewo) – Uckermark – Szczecin Lagoon – Berlin – Venlo – Home

Stage I Casting Off for Scandinavia

June 10–12, 2018 Glücksburg, Copenhagen, and the Leap Across the Øresund

On June 10, the moment has finally arrived: engine on, everyday life off! Our opening leg takes us up to Glücksburg, where we settle into a peaceful waterfront spot by the Fährhaus Holnis. By the very next day, the odometer already reads a proud 1,060 kilometers as we roll into the marina at Svanemøllehavnen in Copenhagen. On June 12, we set our sights on Sweden, gliding high above the water across the monumental Øresund Bridge to Malmö — our Scandinavian adventure has officially begun.



Starting out in Sweden — chairs out, lake view on, and everyday life miles behind us.

Stage II Southern Norway — Rain from Above, Wonder All Around

June 13–16, 2018 Sunny Oslo, 6×6 Kinship, and Climbing Preikestolen

Oslo greets us on June 13 at its absolute best: brilliant sunshine, the entire city out strolling, and an evening spent in lively company with wonderfully friendly fellow off-roaders. Yet the moment we leave the capital on June 14, Norway turns the taps all the way open. Driving through relentless rain into the southern mountains, we make camp at 1,000 meters beside the River Otra near Valle in crisp 12 °C drizzle.

Via Stavanger — including an obligatory stop at the towering “Sverd i fjell” monument — we pull into the Preikestolen campsite and stumble upon a rare delight: parked right next to our Sixfoot is another Oberaigner 6×6 (www.beautifulplanet.info). It is not every day you bump into close family in the wild! On June 16, we put our legs to the test with six hours of hiking and scrambling up to the iconic cliff plateau. The dizzying views are worth every step, and by evening we unwind at a quiet spot on the Erfjord just short of Sand.



Six hours of climbing that pay off tenfold: the breathtaking Preikestolen towering above the Lysefjord.

June 17–19, 2018 A Thousand Waterfalls, Dry Bergen, and Midsummer Confusion

Along the Hardangerfjord, rain once again calls the shots, though it compensates generously by conjuring what feels like a thousand waterfalls down the cliffs and treating us to our first glimpse of a glacier. On June 18, we pass the thundering Steinsdalsfossen and arrive in Bergen to a minor miracle: in Europe's rain capital, the skies stay dry while we stroll and dine superbly. Naturally, the heavens reopen right on cue as we head north by ferry, reaching a completely secluded spot on the Austgulfjorden at 10:30 p.m. in pouring rain.

The next morning, fierce gusts of wind rock the Sixfoot awake. Through Lavik, over the misty Gaularfjellet (6 °C at 1,000 meters), and down to the Sognefjord we push on — until actual sunshine greets our second ferry to Hella. That night, parked all alone along the Lustrafjord, we squint puzzled at the bright night sky: our internal clocks still haven't quite figured out these endless midsummer nights.

June 20–22, 2018 June Snow Squalls and 7,000 Day-Trippers at Geirangerfjord

Covering the 183 kilometers from Lustrafjord across the Sognefjell to Strynefjellet takes a full eight hours — thanks to the stave church in Lom, sleet at 2 °C, and constant photo stops along Breheimen National Park. That evening, we climb a gravel track to the 1,600-meter mountain pass. Outside, snow squalls swirl at 0 °C; inside, we sleep like logs.

On June 21, we descend the tight switchbacks to Geirangerfjord, dodging dozens of oncoming tour buses. Arriving early lands us a front-row campsite right on the water. Two giant cruise ships anchor in the fjord, flooding tiny Geiranger with roughly 7,000 visitors — until 5:00 p.m. sharp, when the spectacle vanishes and peace returns. We celebrate at the Hotel Geiranger buffet. On June 22, we take a rest day by bike — and sleep so soundly at 7:00 a.m. that we completely miss the "Mein Schiff 5" gliding right past our window.

June 23–24, 2018 Atlantic Ocean Road, World Cup Drama, and a Local Tip

Over three ferries and 250 rainy kilometers along the Atlantic Ocean Road (Atlanterhavsvegen) to Kristiansund, we perfect our cockpit teamwork: Heike steers calmly through the downpour while I stream the Germany–Sweden World Cup match live on the iPad. By evening, we have a scenic rest area on the Arasvikfjord all to ourselves — odometer at 3,500 km! On June 24, charming, unhurried Trondheim surprises us with sunshine and 18 °C. Following a tip from Roger, a visitor to our website, we detour onto the lovely artisan island of Inderøya ("Den Gyldne Omvei") before rain inevitably catches up with us again at peaceful Lake Eidsvatnet.

Stage III Arctic Circle, Lofoten Crowds, and Island Dreams

June 25–26, 2018 Through a Mountain, Past Free-Range Cows, and Over the Arctic Circle

Coastal Route Fv17 delivers steady drizzle, three ferries, and — thanks to Dieter from Geiranger — a memorable hike right into the giant natural tunnel piercing Mount Torghatten. At 9:30 p.m., we reach an oceanfront parking spot fenced off with cattle grids against wandering cows. Right as Heike finishes baking a pie, the clouds part for a dry beach stroll! June 26 dawns under clear blue skies: after visiting the seaside church at Alstahaug, we narrowly miss the boat to the eastern approach of the Svartisen Glacier, so we head up the E6 to the Arctic Circle Center instead. At 650 meters elevation, it is a blustery 7 °C — so we cross the line and camp happily in warm sunshine beside a northern mountain stream.

June 27–29, 2018 Lofoten: World Cup Mercy in a Dead Zone, Plus Sun and Crowds

With relentless 10 °C rain thwarting our glacier plans again, we drive to Bodø without a reservation on June 27 and slip onto the Lofoten ferry after a two-hour wait as the second-to-last vehicle aboard. On the choppy crossing to Moskenes, I stream Germany vs. South Korea until the 80th minute — then the signal dies. In hindsight, a merciful blessing! After a good dinner in bustling Å, June 28 rewards us with glorious sun, 14 °C, outdoor coffee and cake, a stroll through Reine, and midnight sun on Ramberg's north beach.

By June 29, drizzle returns at 6–8 °C. The picturesque fishing village of Nusfjord now charges admission, and despite quiet backroads, it is clear the Lofoten islands are straining under worldwide fame and heavy tourist traffic. After exploring charming Henningsvær (4,780 km on the clock), we decide to move on tomorrow to the quieter Vesterålen archipelago.

June 30–July 3, 2018 Nyksund, 22 Hours of Sun on Senja, and King Crab in Tromsø

On June 30, we cruise almost alone along narrow Vesterålen lanes to Nyksund, a once-abandoned fishing village turned insider's gem. Snagging the very last table at Restaurant "Ekspedisjonen" rewards us with our best meal in all of Norway! We park high above the cliffs hoping Heike might spot a whale. The next morning, July 1, our "secluded" spot turns out to sit right on the popular Queen's Route, with hikers cheerfully marching past our bumper. Under 20 °C sunshine we wind north to Andøya, where a textbook midnight sun finally awaits us.



Nyksund in the Vesterålen: once a ghost village, now a culinary gem perched above the Norwegian Sea.

July 2 spoils us with roughly 22 hours of sunshine: from Andenes we take the ferry to Gryllefjord on Senja — jaw-dropping wilderness capped off by midnight sun at the Ersfjord. On July 3, we leave Dieter's second bullseye recommendation via Botnhamn, indulge in delicious fresh king crab in Tromsø, and rejoin the E6 with just 550 kilometers left to the North Cape.



A dream day on Senja: 22 hours of sunshine and scenery straight out of a picture book.

Stage IV Finnmark, the North Cape, and the Far Northeast

July 4–6, 2018 Harbor Porpoises, North Cape Fog Drama, and Laundry Day

During our 380-kilometer drive into Finnmark to the Repparfjord, harbor porpoises surface right beside our lunch parking spot. Across the northern plateaus, Sámi reindeer roam freely while snowmobiles sit parked outside cabins even in July. On July 5, we tackle the final 160 kilometers to the North Cape — arriving in thick, zero-visibility cloud! Fortunately, a cup of coffee works magic: the fog lifts, unveiling the iconic cliff and gifting us a truly unforgettable midnight sun.

After a short night, July 6 brings sunshine and a balmy 20 °C for a long lunch break in Gjesvær. Driving along the Porsangerfjord, the sea throws in an encore: a whole pod of pilot whales glides past. By evening we pull into Stabbursnes Campground — after four weeks on the road, a washing machine is no longer optional.

July 7–8, 2018 Wind Around the Sixfoot and Rosé at the Edge of the World

With clean laundry aboard, we cover 400 kilometers eastward on July 7. The farther we go, the emptier the roads become; oncoming cars can be counted on one hand. After dense 7 °C fog greets us in Vardø, we backtrack slightly along the sunny Varangerfjord coast, where the wind whistles around the Sixfoot as we gaze toward Murmansk. On July 8, we loop past quiet Kirkenes to Grense Jakobselv, parking right on the Barents Sea facing due north — an unusual orientation, ready for our grand finale of the midnight sun.

Stage V Finland — 10,000 Lakes, 29 °C, and Flat Batteries

July 9–12, 2018 Rosé Hangover, Horsefly Escape, and the Air-Conditioning Test

After watching the midnight sun until 2:00 a.m. over two bottles of rosé with Dominique and Jean-Pierre, we don’t get rolling until noon on July 9. Bidding Norway a wistful farewell, we cruise along near-empty Road 971 into Finland and claim a dreamy lakeside beach where a brisk breeze keeps the mosquitoes at bay. On July 10, a morning swim at 25 °C kicks off the drive via Inari to Ivalo, where “heavy traffic” means one car overtaking our leisurely 75 km/h pace every few minutes.

July 11 arrives with 29 °C swimming weather. We beat a hasty retreat from both Tankavaara Gold Village and a national park lake — the local flies, mosquitoes, and horseflies simply outnumber us. At a big lake off the E75, we cool off in the water and run the camper’s air conditioning nonstop for five hours. On July 12, the bill comes due: dead batteries and no running water! Starting the engine saves the day. Winding through Lapland’s birch forests, we claim a quiet parking spot on Lake Kemijärvi, swim three times, and realize with a grin just how spoiled five weeks in the far north have made us.

July 13–15, 2018 Back Across the Arctic Circle, Sauna, and the “Silent People”

At 27 °C on July 13, we follow lonely gravel tracks along the Russian border back south across the Arctic Circle — meaning tonight brings 30 minutes of actual darkness for the first time in weeks! Reindeer and hares dart across our path before we settle by a quiet lake, watching a family of swans and a busy beaver over a glass of wine at sunset. On July 14, a thunderstorm rolls in right as we reach Hossa National Park for laundry day — the perfect excuse for a lakeside Finnish sauna with a cold beer. On July 15, after chatting with two friendly Dutch off-roaders, we marvel at the eerie “Silent People” art installation near Suomussalmi and end the day by the lake at Ala-Vuokki.



A real sunset at last: golden evening calm with the Sixfoot just south of the Arctic Circle.

July 16–21, 2018 Private Beach on Lake Saimaa, Roadside Rescue, and 40 km in Helsinki

On July 16, we cover nearly 400 kilometers into Finnish Karelia to Rääkkylä, where farmland, larger towns, and tongue-twisting place names gradually return. Via charming Savonlinna with its castle and beach, we head for Lake Saimaa. On July 18, the 6×6 drivetrain proves its worth on a rugged track leading to a secluded sandy beach all to ourselves. We spend July 19 lazily swimming and sunbathing at 28 °C, sharing the shore only with a flock of Canada geese.



Hundreds of silent figures: the fascinating “Silent People” installation near Suomussalmi.



Just the Sixfoot, 28 °C sunshine, and Canada geese: our private beach on Lake Saimaa.

On July 20, we reach the Baltic Sea: after coffee and cake in Kotka, we stop to help Vladislava with a flat tire and spend the night on a narrow spit with sea views on both sides. July 21 brings pouring rain for our stroll through pretty Porvoo, yet Helsinki greets us in bright sunshine. We unload the bicycles, pedal 40 kilometers around the capital, and refuel at Café Ursula and Restaurant “Shelter” — after weeks in the wilderness, big-city life feels almost like another planet.

Stage VI The Baltics — From Culture Shock to Lonely Lighthouses

July 22–26, 2018 Tallinn, Honking Horns, and the Magic of Saaremaa

Over a glass-calm sea, we take the ferry to Tallinn on July 22. Its medieval Old Town charms us immediately, and after six weeks of Scandinavian self-service, the attentive hospitality at Restaurant “Ore” feels like pure luxury. The morning of July 23, however, delivers a sharp traffic shock: overtaking, tailgating, honking — welcome back to Central European driving! Once out on quiet country lanes past old farmsteads, abandoned Soviet collective farms, and castles, calm returns. In 30 °C heat, a short ferry brings us to Saaremaa, Estonia’s largest island.

On July 24, we visit the Kaali meteorite crater, stroll around Kuressaare and its imposing episcopal castle, roll down to Sääre — and spontaneously turn left at Lõu. Jackpot: right beside the abandoned Lõu Lighthouse, we have the beach entirely to ourselves, accompanied by screeching gulls and a glorious sunset. On July 25, we rattle 219 kilometers almost exclusively over gravel roads across the island and realize that after six weeks on tour, our brains are happily full. So on July 26, back on the mainland near the Latvian border, we claim a grassy Baltic campsite, do absolutely nothing, and spend the evening swapping travel stories with Klaus and Christa.



Evening gold over Estonia’s Baltic coast — a moment to breathe deeply.



A spontaneous left turn into paradise: our overnight camp beside Lõu Lighthouse.

July 27–29, 2018 Riga, Little Versailles, and Fleeing Palanga

On July 27, we wander through lively Riga all afternoon and evening, sampling its terrific food and drink scene. The next morning we cut across Latvia to magnificent Rundāle Palace — essentially Latvia’s own Versailles — before returning to the Baltic coast to fall asleep to the sound of crashing waves. On July 29, rainy skies inspire a 330-kilometer push south, including 50 wonderfully lonely gravel kilometers before crossing into Lithuania. Then comes maximum contrast: Palanga on a holiday Sunday! After one hour amid the seaside crowds, we surrender and retreat to a peaceful campsite just short of Klaipėda (Memel). One rule holds true: the closer we get to home, the busier the world becomes.

July 30–August 1, 2018 Curonian Spit, Friendly Border Guards, and Trakai Castle

By ferry from Klaipėda on July 30, we explore the Curonian Spit National Park all the way to the Kaliningrad (Russian) border, turning back to spend the night on the mainland side in Ventė with views right across the lagoon to the dunes. On July 31, we follow remote gravel tracks along the River Nemunas right beside the Kaliningrad border. Friendly Lithuanian border guards check us twice without a hitch — making us appreciate the freedom of EU travel more every single day. In Trakai, we hop on our bikes to circle the lake and dine overlooking the fairytale island castle. On August 1, nearly eight weeks of travel fatigue finally catch up, so we spontaneously pause at a quiet lakeside campsite to swim, sort photos, and recharge.



A fitting Baltic finale: Trakai Island Castle glowing in evening light beneath a hot air balloon.

Stage VII Poland, Uckermark, and Back to Everyday Life

August 2–4, 2018 Masurian Avenues, a 500 km Sprint, and Sweet Idleness

On August 2, we cross into Poland and glide for hours down quiet, ancient tree-lined avenues through Masuria along the Kaliningrad Oblast border. While the resort towns on the lakes are packed, we once again find a peaceful hideaway. On August 3, we tackle our longest homeward haul: from 9:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., covering nearly 500 kilometers across Poland into noticeably quieter Pomerania. At “Inter Nos” Campground, set idyllically on an island in Lake Lubieszewo, we follow a strict itinerary on August 4: do absolutely nothing except read and rest. Bliss!

August 5–7, 2018 Szczecin Lagoon, Berlin, and Glass-Smooth Autobahns

On August 5, we cross back into Germany, enjoying a refreshing 23 °C detour through the Uckermark to the Szczecin Lagoon. On August 6, charming — if rather narrow — tree-lined country roads bring us to Berlin for an evening reunion with old friends. Finally, on August 7, we merge onto the Autobahn: after eight weeks of gravel tracks, German motorways feel almost surreal in their smoothness — though shockingly busy! After one last detour toward Venlo to visit new friends made along the way, the Sixfoot rolls back into our own driveway. Everyday life has us back — though surely not for long.

End of Travel Report “North Cape Tour I 2018” · June 10 – August 7, 2018.